Review of Fourth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM in Addis Ababa

▲ *UN-GGIM High Level Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), in collaboration with the government of Ethiopia and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), organised the Fourth High Level Forum on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 20-22 April 2016.

The High Level Forum was opened by H.E. Dr Mulatu Teshome, president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Christiaan Lemmen represented FIG at the event and made the opening remarks on behalf of the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies. On behalf of Prof Chris Rizos, chair of the board, Dr Lemmen congratulated UN-GGIM on placing 'Good Land Governance for the 2030 Agenda' in the context of geospatial information management. He stated that good land governance requires good land administration which provides information and documentation about who owns or uses what, and where. Land administration gives an overview of people-to-land relationships. It is about linking people to spaces. At a global level, 70% of those relationships are currently not documented. Dr Lemmen further stated that information about who, what and where can only be generated with the support of the geospatial disciplines. The Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies deals with a broad range of geospatial technologies and applications, including satellite and drone imaging and mapping, geodesy, precise positioning, geoinformation science, cartography, spatial data infrastructure and many surveying sub-disciplines. Land administration has a geospatial component providing an overview of parcels or spatial units. Relationships between people and land may be of a formal, informal or customary nature. Many of those relations are not recognised and at this point in time there is no inclusiveness for all. Meanwhile, populations and cities are growing and the pressure on land and natural resources is continuing to increase significantly, which can easily lead to disputes and conflicts. A fit-for-purpose approach to land administration has been developed by global stakeholders. It is a gender-sensitive, transparent and highly participatory approach which can be implemented quickly with the support of geospatial technologies.
The challenge for the global land community and for the global geospatial information associations is clear: to secure land rights for all people, in all places, at all times. The biggest challenge is to keep the information on those land rights up to date and accessible. It now depends on political willingness and capacity development.

An Expert Group chaired by Kees de Zeeuw, The Netherlands, and co-chaired by Mahashe Chaka, Lesotho, decided to develop further proposals from now on. One major objective of the Expert Group is to play a leading role at the policy level by raising political awareness and highlighting the importance to decision-makers of the need for timely and fit-for-purpose land administration and management. Another objective is to encourage the use of geospatial information tools and systems to improve the legal certainty of all citizens in the world with respect to the registration of people-to-land relationships. ◀

More information
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GSDI Marine SDI Best Practice Project Update

The GSDI Association has part-funded a two-year research project focusing on identification of developments in marine spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) around the globe. The project grew out of research carried out by Dr Jade Georis-Creuseveau of LETG-Brest Geomer (UMR 6554 CNRS), UBO, Institut Universitaire Européen de la Mer, Plouzané, France. The project co-leaders are Dr Joep Crompvoets of KU Leuven and secretary-general of Euro SDR and Roger Longhorn, secretary-general of the GSDI Association and member of the UNESCO IOC IODE ICAN Steering Group. TKU Leuven and LETG-Brest are both GSDI Association members.
The research includes a web survey to assess the developments of national marine and coastal geoportals for web services. The initial survey led to an inventory of 35 national operational geoportals. For each geoportal, 12 characteristics were identified and measured in November 2014, March 2015 and November 2015 in order to monitor current developments. Based on the preliminary survey results, four types of geoportals were distinguished: Atlas-like, Hydrographic Office, Oceanographic/Marine Data Centre, and Hybrid geoportals.

The survey focuses on geoportals implemented by national public bodies in Europe enabling access to and use of geographic data related to marine and/or